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THE DISTRICT NEWSLETTER FOR REETHS-PUFFER SCHOOLS



ROCKET CITY NEWS

Nurturing Rocket City in the Age of Hashtags, Likes, and Emojis



In a world where many act as though “scrolling” is a new Olympic sport, it continues to be essential to address the ever-evolving dynamics of the digital age. In today’s fast-paced, technologically driven world, we claim to be more “connected” than ever before.

Some might be wondering why I’m penning a letter to address the issue of “community” in the digital age when I could simply start a trendy TikTok dance challenge and call it a day. Well, even though my dance moves are pretty legendary, I thought a good old-fashioned letter might help us connect on a deeper level. Plus, the postal carrier was craving the opportunity to deliver 10,000 copies of this edition of Rocket City News.

In all seriousness, being more connected only refers to our connection to technology, not necessarily to each other. It is possible to be more connected yet lose the sense of belonging and community, to check in more on social media while simultaneously checking out of what’s happening around us.

The proliferation of social media platforms and digital communication tools has fundamentally transformed the way we connect with others. People can “connect” with family, friends, acquaintances, and adversaries 24/7. In school, students are no exception. Students can collaborate on projects, share their thoughts, and communicate with peers more easily than before. While these digital connections offer undeniable benefits, they also have contributed to an apparent decline in the sense of belonging and community. Many individuals, including the younger generation, find themselves lonely and disconnected despite having numerous online friends, subscribers, and followers.

Read MORE on the next page about the factors behind this disconnection and some strategies we can ALL consider in order to continue building an amazing community.

Yours in education, Steve

Steven L. Edwards

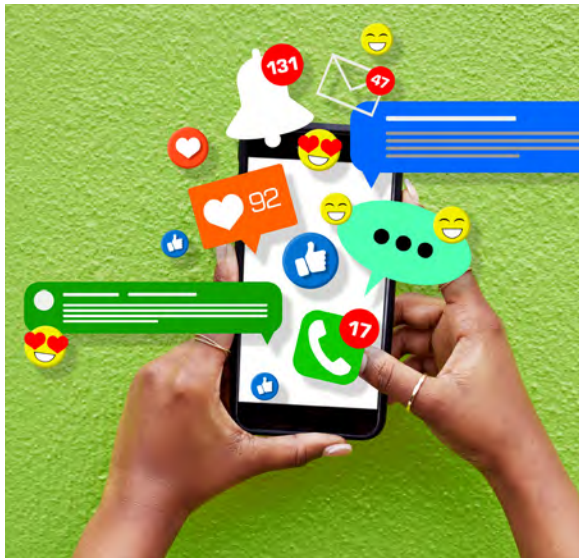
Look for more of the story on page 2!

Nurturing Rocket City in the Age of Hashtags, Likes, and Emojis -

continued from page 1

The “disconnection” likely is due to several factors:

- **Digital Overload-** It's like being at a buffet where they keep adding more dishes, and you end up eating a serving of everything and feeling stuffed. Let's learn to say “no” to that never-ending online feast.
- **Superficial Relationships-** Think of it as having a thousand acquaintances but still wondering who to call when you need help moving a couch. Let's aim for deeper connections beyond likes, hearts, and emojis.
- **Decreased Face-to-Face Interaction-** With so much interaction happening online, the value of face-to-face interaction has diminished. This can have a profound impact on a sense of community. We're all in the same neighborhood, but sometimes the thought of having a chat over the fence seems as outdated as dinosaurs.
- **Cyberbullying and Online Negativity-** Decades ago, if a bully wanted to attack you, at least he had to know where you lived. With cyberbullying, attacking is as easy as hitting a



button. Let's model kindness and empathy, online and offline.

Maintaining the amazing sense of community we have in Rocket City requires thoughtful and deliberate steps.

Among them are:

- **Increasing Digital Literacy-** Promote responsible and empathetic online behavior among all; emphasize positive online connections. The internet isn't just for cat videos and memes. Empathetic online behavior can help build better connections.
- **Prioritizing In-Person Interaction-** Create and take advantage of opportunities for students to interact face-to-face both inside and outside the classroom, including clubs and extra- and co-curricular activities.

- **Accessing Mental Health and Well-Being Programs-** Help students access training and resources for promoting self-care. In a world of status updates and filters, it's okay not to be picture-perfect all of the time. Our kids, especially, need to know this. Model ways to manage stress, conflict, and difficulties because those are realities in the world that can't be edited out.
- **Fostering Inclusivity-** Work hard to make all students and community members feel valued and respected.
- **Volunteering and Engaging in Community Events-** We can all demonstrate for our students what it means to serve our community by modeling and encouraging volunteerism and community involvement, fostering active participation in Rocket City.

In Rocket City, like most communities, the digital age has ushered in both opportunities and challenges. Balancing increased digital connections with a sense of genuine community is essential. By emphasizing digital literacy, encouraging face-to-face interactions, and focusing on the well-being of our children, friends, neighbors and ourselves, Rocket City can continue to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Yours in digital and non-digital friendship, Steve

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ROCKET CITY NEWS

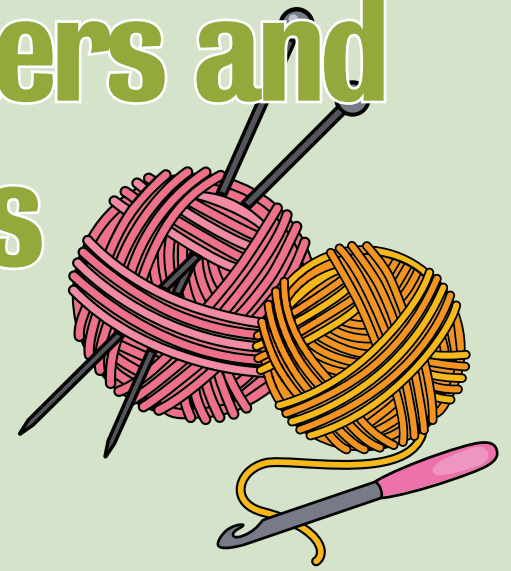
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Bitty Knitters and More Clubs to Come!



Fourth grade student leaders at Central requested a return of the opportunity to knit hats to improve their community. Back in first grade during a curriculum unit on tools, students explored the guiding question “How can kids improve their community using tools?” Students learned how to knit hats for newborn babies at the hospital, as well as donate hats to our homeless shelter in Muskegon. Now that these same students are in fourth grade, they requested to get their knitting club (The Bitty Knitters) back together to continue sowing seeds of positivity around Muskegon County. The Bitty Knitters meet during lunch, and are always looking for donations of yarn, looms, hooks and ideas. Donations can be dropped off to the Central Elementary office.



It doesn't stop with sowing. The staff at Central continues to search for new opportunities to get students plugged-in around strengths and interests. Additional clubs coming soon to Central include the Walking Club, Yoga, and Girls on the Run.



Waste-Free

The Waste-Free lunch program at Central Elementary is growing and expanding. The program was originally launched in 2018 in an effort to reduce the amount of waste sent to the landfill. Students sort compost and recycling from actual waste with an 80% reduction compared to normal lunch days. This year, Mrs. Droski and Mrs. Sandee's classes have been trained and are now training some of Ms. Nauta's kindergarteners. Additionally, students launched school-wide composting at all times. The compost will be used to feed Central gardens in the spring. Students create all of the marketing materials for Waste Free Wednesday, including informative announcements and advertisements posted in the hallways. Our goal at Central is



not just to be a certified Michigan Green School but to be the GREENEST school in Michigan!

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OUTDOOR CLASSROOM



Our little Rockets are loving learning outside! We've released salmon into the Muskegon River, made our own maple syrup, planted hundreds of trees, built and hung bat houses, installed three sister gardens, and launched a weather station. The kids are thirsty for more! Please consider helping raise funds for a permanent pavilion-style outdoor classroom in the Central courtyard. Be looking for opportunities to support in the coming weeks/months, or reach out to the office for more information.

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Safe Routes



Safe Routes to School kicked off as Central participated in National Walk to School Day. Just under 300 students participated! Safe Routes to School aims to increase safety around walking and biking to and from school. Throughout the school year, we will be putting on events centered on movement and walking/biking safety. Be on



the lookout for surveys in upcoming parent communication pieces as we look to identify and meet the needs of Central families. We look forward to structuring more walking and biking opportunities throughout the year, and having a lot of fun doing it!



SOAR!



The staff at Central recently gathered at the Muskegon Luge for an afternoon of fellowship and fun, and to launch our theme for the year through a shared experience on the zipline. We've gone through a lot these past few years, but have grown stronger and more steadfast in our resilience and resolve. Thank you for your ongoing partnership, support, grace, and collaboration. 2023-2024 will be a year in which we continue to test the limits, dare to try, and reach new heights. Thank you for being in it, with us, for kids. Together we'll soar!



Exploring Nature's Classroom

Kindergartners at Pennsylvania Elementary are embarking on exciting educational adventures that take them beyond the confines of traditional classrooms. The focus is not solely on indoor instruction; it's about learning through exploration and engagement with the natural world. Through activities such as nature walks, gardening, and outdoor science experiments, students get hands-on experiences that foster a deep appreciation for the environment. We study local ecosystems, environments and wildlife, nurturing a sense of curiosity and wonder. As these young learners explore, they develop essential life skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and a sense of responsibility for the environment.

Our nature-based theme learning emphasizes the importance of experiential learning, encouraging students to ask questions and seek answers through observation and hands-on activities. This approach not only makes learning more engaging but also instills a lifelong love for nature and science.

Through their outdoor experiences, these kiddos are becoming not just book-smart but nature-smart as well. They are growing up with a deeper understanding of the world around them and a profound sense of environmental stewardship, setting the stage for a future generation of responsible and environmentally conscious citizens.

At Pennsylvania Elementary, learning in nature isn't just an alternative method; it's a philosophy that embraces the idea that the great outdoors is a classroom in itself, filled with valuable lessons waiting to be discovered.



A looking/listening walk to identify birds



Weeding in the hoophouse



Working on our Bug Hotel to provide a habitat for pollinators and other insects



Participating in the Big Crunch at Heritage Farms Market



Observing and documenting the outdoor learning environment



Taking care of our fruit orchard



Investigating the differences in birds



Hiking at Snug Harbor



Weeding in the hoophouse



Shelter Building at Snug Harbor

Career AG-exploration

On May 20, the Career Ag-xploration event was held at the Muskegon Farmer's Market for students and their families to explore and learn more about future careers in agribusiness. This event was made possible through a partnership with West MI Works, the Agribusiness Talent Council and the MAISD. Over 350 people actively engaged in the activities during the event and over 750 people went through the event. This event was open to all K-12 students in Muskegon County. We know career development begins way before high school. In grades K-5, the goals are to help students become aware of all the possibilities that are open to them and to lay a foundation for further exploration in middle school and preparation in high school. This event was a great way for students and their families to see and explore through hands-on activities some of the careers in farming and food production.

As a part of the event, there was a school library book giveaway. Surveys were collected from the participants at the event, asking what school they or their children attend. Reeths-Puffer Elementary was 1 of the top 4 local school buildings that turned in the most surveys. As



a result, Reeths-Puffer Elementary received a book donation to our school library.

Karrie Brown, from West Michigan Works & the Council Lead for the Agribusiness Talent Council and Michelle Kuck, MAISD K-5 Career Specialist presented and delivered these books to our school library this September. These books were made possible by a generous donation from the Muskegon Farm Bureau. We are so grateful for these new books added to our library collection. We are hoping

Reeths-Puffer Elementary students come to the Farmer's Market again this May to participate in the next Career Ag-xploration Event! Thank you for helping us to win this book donation by bringing your child to this event and helping them to think about their future careers! Maybe we have future biochemists, agricultural managers, or John Deere salesmen among us!



RIF at RPEL

Books! Kids! Smiling faces! RIF comes to RPEL! Thanks to the effort, passion and the pure goodness of her heart, Mrs. Lori Goryl brings books from the RIF Foundation to our school twice a year for students to take home and keep forever. Mrs. Goryl is a retired RP Title 1 Reading teacher who has put in countless hours and hard work to keep this program going in our district. In 1986 the McMillan Elementary PTO applied for a RIF grant and was awarded \$600. That amount was matched by the McMillan Parent/Teacher Organization to provide \$1,200 for three book distributions that year. And she has never looked back! Entering its 38th year, Mrs. Goryl, along with her valuable assistants, continues to ignite the love of reading and showering students with RIF books to this day. When your student comes home from school with brand new books and can tell you that "Reading is the Key!", you can thank Mrs. Goryl and her positive, enthusiastic love for reading! RPEL is so grateful for this awesome program and people like Mrs. Goryl!



RPEL Art Prize Trip 2023

On Thursday, September 21st, fourth grade students from RPEL took their learning on the road to Grand Rapids for Art Prize 2023! At school, the students have been investigating two guiding questions; “What makes a poem a poem?” and “What inspires writers to write poetry?” On the trip to Art Prize, students were busy finding inspiration in more than just poetry. By reading artist statements and talking to artists who were present, the students were able to see all the different things that inspire people to complete their creative works. Students are now busy researching poets, song writers, and artists in order to write essays about where they see evidence of inspiration in their work. In November, students will have the opportunity to put their own inspiration into practice when they complete a creative piece to display at their Evening of Inspiration! Please join us from 6:00pm-7:00pm on Thursday, November 30 in the RPEL/RPI cafeteria to see the learning these amazing fourth graders have put into practice!



***“This doesn’t even feel like school!
Thank you so much for bringing us here!”***

- Jillian McCollum 4th grader at RPEL





Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) Program

Reeths-Puffer Schools and Muskegon Area Intermediate Service District has teamed up with Muskegon County Local School Districts to welcome back a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program to Muskegon County. With the D/HH Program's launch at the beginning of last school year it has grown from 4 staff members supporting 9 students to 10 staff members supporting 17 students (and counting) across 9 different districts. The D/HH Program consists of an Early Childhood Special Education classroom at McMillan Early Childhood Center and two Elementary classrooms K-2nd located at Reeths-Puffer Elementary. As the students advance in age, the program plans to grow with them into the upper grade levels. Students within the program have been recommended by Early On and/or their Local School District to require specialized programming by staff trained to work with students with hearing differences and/or American Sign Language (ASL). Last year, they held 4-week ASL classes at Muskegon ISD for families to attend with their students as well as once a month Coffee Chats at RP Elementary to help grow staff member confidence with ASL. This year they are launching Family Days in October, February, and May to help bring the Early Childhood and Elementary Program together to develop a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community across staff, students, and their families.

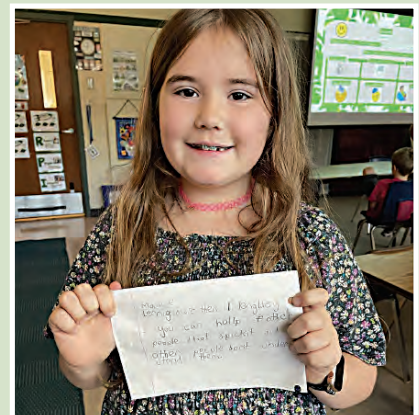
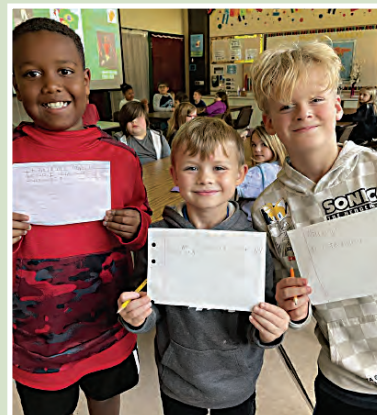
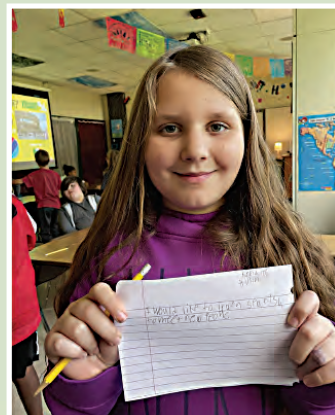
A Minion Reasons to Study Spanish!

The students at RPEL have been diving into the world of Español and figuring out how it can impact their own life by studying famous people like Ellen Ochoa, Pablo Picasso, and Selena Quintanilla. We often talk about in class how Spanish speakers affect us but did you know how speaking the language Spanish will affect your child?

Please check out this list below for some of the minion reasons why someone should pursue learning another language and the benefits it will have for your child! These bullet points come from languageworld.com and go into greater detail if you are interested.

- Learning a Second Language Boosts brain power
- Better problem-solving and other cognitive abilities
- Bilingual Child Achieve Higher academic achievement and test scores
- Gives students a head start in language requirements for college
- Children Who Learn a Second Language Have Increased Empathy
- Better understanding of other cultures and connecting with people that speak other languages
- Better career opportunities

Here are a few reasons why Mrs.Hildebrandt's class chooses to learn Spanish...



Cole: *"Spanish is important because you can make new friends."*

Matthew: *"I can travel more easily speaking Spanish."*

Kendra: *"I would like to learn Spanish to meet new people."*

Kendyll: *"I like Spanish because it makes me happy"*

SNOW PLOW SAFETY DAY



Twin Lake Elementary got a visit from the Muskegon County Road Commission! The K-2 classes were able to get up close and personal with one of the plow trucks that the county uses. The idea behind Snow Plow Safety Day is for the students to learn how they can stay safe while the plows are out on the road. The three main things that students took away from this experience were: Don't build forts by the road, make sure to stay away from the road while waiting for the bus, and to always be on the lookout for the snow plows. The classes even got the chance to get up in the driver's seat and see what the plow drivers see while they are out on the roads. To top off this great experience, the students got to sign their names on one of the plows that will be out keeping our roads clear!



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DK Is Back at Twin Lake Elementary

After a 1-year hiatus, Twin Lake Elementary is happy to have this crucial classroom and curriculum back! Connect4Learning® is the research-based, prekindergarten curriculum. It integrates research-validated teaching methodologies from early childhood experts in mathematics, science, literacy, and social-emotional learning. At TLE, students have jumped right into one of the biggest skills we teach throughout the entire year: Friendship Skills. The 6 main friendship skills taught are: Asking to play, Giving a compliment, Helping a friend, Give a play idea, Taking turns, and Friendly touches.

During our Helping a friend lessons, students are given a large pile of foam blocks and need to give ideas on what to build, help each other accomplish the task, and take turns.

Giving these students the opportunity to learn these skills before entering Kindergarten is extremely important and Reeths-Puffer is excited to bring this program to kids who need it.



Twin Lake Elementary's A Very Merry Holiday Concert



Room 18 is alive with the sound of music at Twin Lake Elementary! Students have been singing, playing instruments, moving and grooving. Students are preparing to welcome you as we usher in the Holidays through song and dance. This will be a whole school event that you won't want to miss! We hope to see you there!

Twin Lake Elementary's A Very Merry Holiday Concert
December 11th, 2023
6 PM
At the Rocket Centre for Performing Arts

“It’s nice to be important, but more important to be nice.”

Aaron Coon

October 16th, 2023:

On a beautiful fall evening, more than 80 family members and friends gathered at Twin Lake Elementary to dedicate the outdoor learning area to Aaron Coon, who made it all happen. This project was a result of Aaron's love for others and his love for Twin Lake Elementary, who he credits with providing him some of the best memories of his life.

A few years ago, Aaron was diagnosed with Glioblastoma Multiforme, a form of brain cancer from which he battled hard to beat. During this time Aaron was contacted by the Make a Wish Foundation to receive a donation. He told them promptly that he wanted to donate his gift somewhere that can help others feel important. This desire and love for others led to him wanting to share his donation with Twin Lake Elementary to create an outdoor learning area. Just as



ground broke, sadly, Aaron developed an aggressive and inoperable tumor that resulted in his passing.

The excitement Aaron showed to his Twin Lake people about this project was infectious and inspiring. In fact, he was so excited to get this project started that he set up the first step directly after the breakfast meeting with Mom and the

school. He said, “I will call Mike Rose to get it started,” he continued, “I bet he’ll even donate his work to the school.” By the time the school called, Mike Rose’s response was, “we are all set and there will be no charge, when do you want us to start?”

The outdoor learning area will display four sketches from Aaron’s drawing book and a quote from an interview that Aaron had when family and friends met up at Bernie O’s to celebrate his amazing generosity and character.

Aaron, we hope to live up to the standard of kindness and selflessness you have set for us! As we enjoy our outdoor learning area for years to come, we will strive to live by those words: “It is nice to be important, but more important to be nice.”

Thank you, Aaron



Listen To The Kids

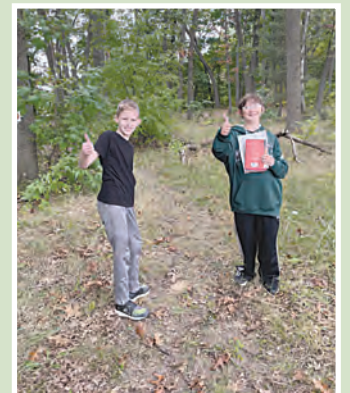
If you are like me, every time you turn on the news, radio or scroll through social media, negativity seems to swirl around. To the point that I avoid it most of the time. Since the start of school, we have been really focusing on what the kids are saying and doing here at RPI. In listening to them here is what I hear: laughter, supporting one another, understanding, joy and simply being a kid. Perhaps there is a reason that so many songs speak to the joy of our past youth. For us, we get to relive it daily with our kids as they enjoy each other, school and interacting with the staff. Do we have our challenges...ABSOLUTELY. Do we have far more positives than negatives...1000%. So, in the midst of all the craziness of life and negativity that seems to surround us like Pig Pen's dust in the Charlie Brown shows, take a minute and listen to the kids. They are thriving, they are having fun, they can remind us of lost perspective and they can teach us about so much more than we could have imagined!

Have a great fall!
Scott



PEER
to
PEER
START Project

This year we have started a Peer to Peer program at RPI. This is an evidence-based program that is intended to promote belonging, independence and enhance the learning experiences for students with and without disabilities. The students involved this year all participate in their morning special everyday together. Then once a month the LINKS (or peers without disabilities) join Mrs. Olsen for lunch where they spend time learning more about individuals with disabilities. The final piece of this is the FUN. The group will have at least one Fun Friday activity per month. In September, we had a scavenger hunt on the Meijer trail and then came inside for Caramel Apple Nachos! Everyone had a great time and we can't wait to see how the friendships continue to grow this year!





RPI Choir

The Rocketeers (After-School Choir)

The Rocketeers is our optional RPI after-school choir ensemble! With 107 students, one insane and also slightly tired director, a massive joint concert with the Middle School & High School Choirs, an awesome trip to DEFY Muskegon and a final pizza party extravaganza, it's safe to say that last year's "season" of Rocketeers was definitely one for the books! I am extremely

proud of these singers, as they opt to spend every Monday & Tuesday after school...singing? The fact that these students dedicate their time to improve their passion for vocal music outside of school is truly remarkable. Special shoutout to the Rocketeers Mascot last year: Bald Mr. Lawton. (Yes...the students vote on one every year....could you tell?)





Summer Adventure 2023

RPI students embarked on a Summer Adventure alongside their school counselors. Over the course of four weeks, these students conquered high ropes courses, scaled rock walls, navigated a canoe trip with turtles, hiked and biked trails, practiced their archery skills, managed a zip-line, crafted a bit and even found a bit of peace through yoga amidst the pines.

While at Camp Pandalouan, Duck Lake State Park, Muskegon Snug Harbor State Park, and Muskegon Luge they engaged in lessons regarding mental wellness, a sense of belonging, self-acceptance, and learned strategies to manage rugged moments.

Nature provided an amazing classroom environment and students were eager to learn and engage with one another.

RPI BANDS ARE OFF TO A GREAT START!



The Reeths-Puffer Intermediate Bands are off to a great start! We have a lot to look forward to as the year progresses. Don't miss our 5th Grade Falling Notes Concert in November, 6th Grade Holiday Band Concert in December, or our exciting Band-O-Rama in March! We will be firing up the Rocket Junior Band after the holiday break and will begin our sign-ups for our 2025 Walt Disney World trip (current 6th graders). So many opportunities ahead! Go Rocket Band!



Nate Smith
Director of Instruction
and Learning

Mistakes: The Building Blocks of Learning

What R-P Students Say

7th Grader: "I try redoing things and ask for help, I also think about something that I might have not been doing, like listening."

8th Grader: "I learn from my mistakes and see what I need to do next time and try to fix it."

8th Grader: "I redo things, erase it and fix it. I don't feel bad when I make a mistake."

Freshman: "Mistakes make me learn more, remind me not to be anxious about doing things perfectly, I like it when teachers encourage openly to learn from mistakes."

Sophomore: "A mistake makes me talk to my teacher about fixes and the impacts on the things in my group. Mistakes make me change my ways, study harder and do things differently. When I do things a different way it makes me feel good and not overthink the mistake."

What Data Tells US

In many places, mistakes are often seen as something to avoid, a sign of failure, or a source of embarrassment. However, in education and at Rocket City mistakes play a vital role in the learning process. Mistakes are not something that has to be a setback; they are necessary to acquiring knowledge, skills and creative wisdom. At Reeths-Puffer we understand that sometimes the most skillful people have made the most mistakes.

In school, mistakes force us to pause and think about what went wrong. This reflection process is crucial for learning. By reflecting on our errors, we gain a deeper understanding of the subject or task at hand. Through this self-assessment, we can identify the areas that need improvement and develop strategies to avoid making the same mistakes in the future.

Mistakes Build Resilience: The ability to bounce back from setbacks is crucial in life. Making mistakes, facing the consequences, and persevering through challenges fosters resilience. It teaches us that failure is not the end of the road but rather an opportunity to grow. It's through our mistakes that we learn how to handle adversity with grace and determination.

Mistakes Encourage Creativity: In the process of trial and error, mistakes often lead to unexpected outcomes. These unexpected outcomes can spark creativity and innovation. Sometimes, the most significant discoveries and breakthroughs in science, technology, and the arts have been the results of unintended mistakes. It's in these uncharted territories that we often find new solutions and ideas.

Mistakes Foster Humility: Admitting our mistakes and learning from them requires humility. It reminds us that we are not perfect and that there is always more to learn in life. This humility is essential for personal intellectual growth, as it keeps us open to new perspectives and ideas.

Mistakes should not be feared or avoided at Reeths-Puffer, but embraced when the intent is to improve. They are the proof that we are a learning community that is actively engaging with the world, seeking to understand, and striving to become better versions of ourselves. So, the next time you make a mistake, remember that it's not a sign of failure but a sign that you are growing. Let's embrace, learn, and improve using our mistakes to continue to grow as a community.

Article written with the help of Chat Gpt AI and Reeths-Puffer students.

Coding at R-P



The students in our Summer Acceleration program, STEM classrooms grades 5-8, and our computer science classrooms.

now have access to two types of programmable robots through community partners.

These robots allow students to code in multiple formats, the most common being block coding. Students program their robot, are given challenges, then design problems with their robots for others to solve. This form of learning requires trial and error and working together in competitions.

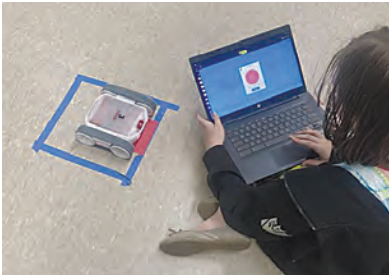


The coding, mechanics of the robots and multiple technology applications are a great launch into our High School Computer Science programs, in which students compete in Gaming Concepts where they design game environments, robotics competition, 3D printing and other



relevant computer science trades.

The Sphero Bolt is a programmable sphere bot that can communicate using a light display and is able to move in multiple directions. It can be programmed to run obstacle courses, follow directions and nudge or move items based on the programming entered by the students.



The Sphero RVR+ robot is a programmable machine that is able to add task attachments allowing for climbing and programmed course navigation. It also is able to respond to other robots and solve challenges such as moving objects and placing items in an environment.

We are very excited for the enhancements to our entry level coding and computer science programs for our middle level coders!



Impact of Joy on Learning

Joy can have a significant impact on learning. When students experience joy and positive emotions in the learning process, it can lead to several beneficial outcomes.

- **Increased Motivation:** Joy and enjoyment can serve as intrinsic motivators for learning. When students find joy in what they are learning, they are more likely to be engaged, attentive, and eager to explore and understand the subject matter.



- **Increased Curiosity:** Joy can foster curiosity and a thirst for knowledge. It can encourage students to ask questions, explore topics further, and seek a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

- **Improved Memory and Retention:** Positive emotions, including joy, can



enhance memory and retention. When students feel joy while learning, they are more likely to remember and recall what they've learned, which can lead to better long-term retention of knowledge.

- **Enhanced Creativity:** Joy can stimulate creativity and problem-solving abilities. When learners are in a positive and joyful state of mind, they are more open to new ideas and innovative

thinking, which can lead to creative solutions to problems.

- **Reduced Stress and Anxiety:** Joy can help reduce stress and anxiety associated with learning. When students enjoy the learning process, they are less likely to feel overwhelmed or stressed, leading to a more relaxed and effective learning experience.
- **Positive Learning Environment:** A joyful learning environment is more conducive to effective learning. Teachers and educators can create



a positive and joyful atmosphere in the classroom, which can lead to better learning outcomes and student well-being.



- **Long-Term Interest:** Joy in learning can help develop a lifelong love for learning. When students associate joy with learning experiences, they are more likely to continue pursuing education and personal growth throughout their lives.



R-P learning communities are always looking to establish joy in our learning environments. This is a key to continued learning in life, learning from mistakes and in general striving to be better every day and leads to the outcomes that improve achievement



Ride With Pride Sponsors

We would like to send a HUGE THANK YOU out to our Ride With Pride sponsors for this year! 23-24 is shaping up to be the best Ride With Pride yet! As of October, we would like to thank:

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Thanks to the support of these sponsors, we can advance our Ride With Pride programming in the schools. Participating students will have opportunities to earn some great incentives at the end of the year!

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor please reach out to Jennifer LaChapelle at lachapellej@reeths-puffer.org to learn more.



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Taste of the Arts Food Truck Festival helps RPMS Performers go from ON-line to ON-stage!

On Sunday, October 22nd, the R-P Middle School Choir & Theatre Arts students hosted the 3rd Annual "Taste of the Arts Food Truck Festival" at R-PMS! The fundraising event featured performances by 200+ R-P singers & actors, the R-PHS Jazz Band as well as ten local Food Trucks & other supportive small businesses. Proceeds from the event will help to purchase essential supplies such as sheet music & scripts, uniforms, instructional staff stipends & special event scholarships for the coming school year. Our program theme this year was "Find Your Voice". We hope to highlight the many beautiful aspects of R-P through the performing arts & these funds will help us to do just that! Thank you, Rocket Community for supporting our students & hope to see you at an event in the coming school year.





REWARDS FOR BEING ON-TIME AT RPMS

Friday Afternoons are filled with a brief announcement that all students pay close attention to. That is when 15 random students are announced and get to spend the end of the day in the RPMS Rocket Rec Room. The criteria to participate is simple: Have no tardies for the entire week. From that list of students, 15 lucky students are drawn and get to end the day playing air hockey, foosball, arcade games, and video games. Students share their hope to be picked (and their disappointment when they aren't picked!), but it is definitely something all Rockets look forward to each week.



Middle School Bands Are Having a Blast



Our Middle School Bands are having a blast! In September, they had the opportunity to join the Rocket Marching Band for a home football game, and in October, members of our Symphonic Band went to the Chicago Symphony, Blue Man Group, Museum of Science & Industry, and got to experience real Chicago deep dish pizza! Soon, we will begin our sign-ups for our 2025 Walt Disney World trip. The kids are having the time of their lives and are excited for what's to come! Check out the smiles on their faces!





High School Band “Sparks” Interest

Our Rocket Marching Band is inspiring audiences with their exciting production entitled “Spark.” The Rocket Marching Band has continued their tradition of excellence, winning 1st place and all caption awards in MCBA competitions as well as being a finalist in the Bands of America Regional Championship in Obetz, Ohio. This year our High School Band will be packing their bags and traveling to Ireland to experience the joy of making music around the world. Providing our students with experiences and opportunities of a lifetime is a fundamental goal of our program as we develop 21st century leaders through the art of music.

Homecoming Represents Respect, Pride, and Integrity

The rain, lightning, and wind provided an extra test, but Rocket City was unwavering with their demonstration of The Rocket Way. Student leaders and advisors put in many hours to ensure the week was full of opportunities for students to feel connected to each other and our community. The annual Powderpuff game started the week and displayed spirit, competitiveness, and definitely athleticism. Spirit days had great participation and were full of creativity.

For the first time since 2000, the ceremony moved inside and the homecoming court and representatives remained positive and grounded in the honor to represent Rocket City. As part of the senior homecoming court, candidates created a two-minute video for students that showed how they represent respect, pride and integrity. The videos showed athletics, leadership, kindness, creativity, theater, band, choir, academic commitment, and a deep pride for being a rocket. The candidates Bryce Ross, JT Fansler, Luke Callender, Trenton Reichart, Victor Williams, Addyson Novak, Alexa Velez, Emerson Buzzell, Irelyn Niklasch and Natalie Kunnen, along with underclassmen representatives, Wren Tryska, London Carpenter, Maya Vandenbosch, Andrew Corradin, Hayden Harris, and Monte Rodriguez represented RP well. Victor Williams and Addyson Novak left as the king and queen.

Continuing with the theme of flexibility, the dance has to be moved from under the lights in our stadium to the cafeteria. Students danced from start to finish and had so much fun. Our student leaders worked hard on the music, decorations, and small details that made the night special for hundreds of their peers.

We have so many reasons to be proud of our high school students and it is clear that they are proud to represent Rocket City.





Induction Is Just The Beginning— Leadership, Service, Character, and Scholarship



On Monday, October 9th, an amazing group of students was inducted to the Reeths-Puffer National Honors Society. Students must have a 3.5 grade point average to be eligible to apply for NHS and then must demonstrate leadership, community service, and character through the application process to be selected.



This group represents student athletes, choir members, band members, student council members, Rotary members and individuals highly involved in the community outside of the school.

Their accolades can be listed, but what is hard to measure is the impact this group will have on our school community. They will jump in to volunteer and many events, but most

importantly, they are the backbone of our Homework Workshop. Every single Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, any high school student can attend Homework Workshop where they are met with support from teachers and NHS tutors. Peers helping peers reach goals and work to improve is powerful. Additionally, NHS members can choose to attend training and officially serve as a mentor to students with the same purpose of empowering others to help reach their goals and experience success.

Congratulations to our NHS inductees. The future is bright as a result of your priority to lead and serve.

Flexible Support For Many Needs

As the new addition of Flex (a forty-minute block of time on Tuesday and Thursday each week) has become a routine, the ways in which staff and students are using it is taking off. The top priority is to build relationships between each student and the teacher they will have for Flex for four years and to provide targeted academic support. That certainly is happening. To start the year, as we are still building routines, each day, we have seen over 100 students requested by teachers for specific academic support which could look like assessment support, reteaching, or pre-teaching. When asked, one student reported that “he loves just knowing that he can ask his teacher to request him if his AP class seems overwhelming. The extra help works.” We also know that over time, the small conversations and supportive interactions are what builds strong relationships.

In addition to academic help, students are being blasted with support during Flex focused on college preparation. Counselors have been able to meet with students and offered weekly support (cleverly called Apply Tuesday) every Tuesday in which they walked through the college application process with students and supported essay writing. Through the start of the year, we have seen 25 different college representatives available to students during Flex.

We can't wait to see our students thrive as their ownership and intentional use of Flex continues to grow.





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April 15, 2024

July 15, 2024

May 20, 2024

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